

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO FACULTY OF MUSIC

FACULTY ARTISTS SERIES

Friday, September 27, 1991

8:00pm

Walter Hall

PROGRAMME

NEXUS

Bob Becker, Bill Cahn, Robin Engelman
Russell Hartenberger, John Wyre

Mudra (1990)

Bob Becker

Marubattoo (1988)

John Wyre

Memembrance (1988)

Robin Engelman

Michael White, trumpet
Gordon Sweeney and Frank Harmantas, trombones

****INTERMISSION****

Slow Swirl at the Edge of the Sea (1991)

Mark Duggan

world premiere

Red Norvo Suite (1933, arr. 1981)

Red Norvo
arr. Bill Cahn

Breakfast Breakdown

Dance of the Octopus

Knockin' On Wood

Judy Loman, harp

Nimbus (1991)

Nexus & Phil Nimmons

Phil Nimmons, clarinet

PROGRAMME NOTES

Mudra

Bob Becker

Mudra consists of music that was originally composed to accompany the dance UrbhanaMudra by choreographer Joan Phillips. Commissioned by INDE '90 and premiered in Toronto in March 1990 as part of the Du Maurier Quay Works Series, Urbhana Mudra was awarded the National Arts Centre Award for best collaboration between composer and choreographer. The music was subsequently edited and reorchestrated as a concert piece for Nexus during May 1990. *Mudra* is scored for marimba, vibraphone, songbells, glockenspiel, crotales, muffled drum and bass drum.

The composer writes: "In this piece, I knew I wanted to use an instrumental ensemble in an accompaniment role similar to that found in traditional Indian dance concerts where a solo drum is the principal voice, I did not, however, want to use Indian instruments, nor did I wish to imitate an 'Indian' sound with western instruments. In response to the choreographic approach, I wanted to allow my awareness of classical Indian musical structures to influence the formal, rhythmic, and harmonic aspects of the music. Although Indian music is usually characterized as being elaborately melodic with no harmony, my personal experience from the beginning has been a strong sensation of implied harmonic movement. This subliminal effect is clearly related to my cultural background and training in western classical music and is the type of uniquely interesting cross-referencing always experienced when one strong cultural expression encounters another.

Rhythmically, *Mudra* is based on two important and common structures found throughout North Indian music: motivic development (palta) and rhythmic cadence formulas(ti hai). These structural devices are used most systematically in the final drum solo section of the piece, in which rhythmic rather than harmonic cadencing is used to create tension and, ultimately, accord."

Marubattoo

John Wyr

Marubattoo is the expansion of Maruba, commissioned by Ex Tenebris with the support of the Ontario Arts Council. It is a recent composition for marimba and tuba, written for Beverly Johnston and Scott Irvine in the summer of 1987. In developing Maruba for Nexus, I have given the melody (tuba line) to bass marimba and have added crotales (tuned antique cymbals) to support the melodic line. I have also added another marimba part and a vibraphone part so there are three voices (2 marimba and 1 vibraphone) that support the melodic lines in the bass marimba and crotales. *Marubattoo* was completed in October 1988.

Remembrance

Robin Engelman

Old familiar tunes, in whole or in part, frequently come to mind. A rhythmic motive or a particular succession of tones can spontaneously remind one of music heard in the past. The resulting juxtaposition of what is being heard and the intrusion of the familiar tune are often bizarre, but not irreverent. *Remembrance* was written in 1988 because of these experiences.

Slow Swirl at the Edge of the Sea

Mark Duggan

The title of *Slow Swirl at the Edge of the Sea* comes from a painting by American artist Mark Rothko. Rothko's work, along with the suggestion of the title - the movement of water in its various natural forms - was the main source of inspiration for this piece. In writing it, I wanted to work with the idea of gradually changing tempos within an improvisatory-sounding texture to create a rather loose and fluid kind of motion. The opportunity to write not only for the ensemble but for the individual members of Nexus was also an inspiration for which I would like to express my great thanks. *Slow Swirl at the Edge of the Sea* was commissioned by Nexus in 1989 as part of its Toronto Arts Award in music. The commission was sponsored by Maclean Hunter.

Red Norvo Suite (1933)

Arr. Bill Cahn

In the 1930's, the "Novelty" Rag style which had been so popular in the preceding decade, began to give way to the newer "Swing" style of jazz. Kenneth (Red) Norville (Norvo) was almost alone in this new style of music performance on an instrument that was fading in popularity - the xylophone. *Breakfast Breakdown*, *Dance of the Octopus* and *Knockin' on Wood* were composed around 1933 for xylophone and a small ensemble consisting of piano, guitar, bass and clarinet. Norvo's works of this period show an astounding degree of originality, not only in the chord progressions, but also in the softness and almost impressionist sound that occurs, particularly in *Dance of the Octopus*. These three works have been rearranged for Nexus by Bill Cahn.

Nimbus

Phil Nimmons & Nexus

Since 1971 Nexus has been practicing making music spontaneously, and improvisations are often included on concerts. The late Cornellius Cardew, British composer and performer, wrote: "improvisation cannot be rehearsed. Training is substituted for rehearsal, and a certain moral discipline is an essential part of this training. Improvisation is in the present, its effect may live on in the souls of the participants, both active and passive (ie audience), but in its concrete form it is gone forever from the moment that it occurs, nor did it have any previous existence before the moment that it occurred, so neither is there any historical reference available. Informal 'sound' has a power over our emotional responses that formal 'music' does not, in that it acts subliminally rather than on a cultural level. I am searching for sounds and for the responses that attach to them, rather than thinking them up, preparing them and producing them. The search is conducted in the medium of sound and the musician himself is at the heart of the experiment". Phil Nimmons' joy for music-making has inspired the members of Nexus on many occasions over the past few years. We are honoured to be able to create a new piece with him at this 20th anniversary concert.

TONIGHT'S ARTISTS

Formed in 1971 by Bob Becker, William Cahn, Robin Engelman, Russell Hartenberger and John Wyre, NEXUS has come to be recognized as one of the foremost chamber ensembles in the world. Through twenty years of performing together, the five members of Nexus have developed a unique repertoire and rapport, allowing audiences to enter, experience and enjoy the special world that is a Nexus concert. Nexus was the recipient of the Toronto Arts Awards in 1989, and further international acclaim has resulted from the premiere performance of Toru Takemitsu's *From me flows what you call Time*, composed for Nexus and the Boston Symphony Orchestra and commissioned by Carnegie Hall for its 1990-91 Centennial Celebration.

Nexus performs a wide and eclectic range of music. Contemporary composers who have been commissioned to write for the group include Warren Benson, John Hawkins, Jo Kondo, Bruce Mather, Kirk Nurock, Steve Reich, Toru Takemitsu and James Tenney. The group also performs music composed by members of the ensemble. Their distinctive repertoire for percussion and symphony orchestra has led to appearances with major North American orchestras including the Boston Symphony, the Cleveland Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Toronto Symphony, and the orchestras of Atlanta, Buffalo, Dallas, Detroit, Rochester, and the National Arts Center (Ottawa). Nexus created and performed the music for the Academy Award winning film, "The Man Who Skied Down Everest." Recent releases include five CD's and a video, *Super Percussion*, filmed at the Tokyo Music Joy Festival in 1988.

Since 1975, the group has travelled extensively including tours of Australia and New Zealand, Asia (they were the first western percussion group to perform in the Peoples' Republic of China), Scandinavia and Europe, as well as regular appearances throughout the United States and Canada. Nexus has been featured at the Adelaide Festival, the Holland Festival, the Tanglewood Music Festival, the Toronto International Festival, the Los Angeles Festival, the Forum des PercussionThe British Percussion Festival, World Drums festivals at Expo '86 in Vancouver and Expo '88 in Brisbane and the Calgary Olympic Arts. A Cross Canada tour takes place in October and November of 1991, followed immediately with solo and orchestral concerts in Japan with Seiji Ozawa and the New Japan Philharmonic. In December, Nexus performs with the Orchestre Nationale de Lyon in Grenoble and Lyon, France. During early 1992, Nexus will touring in the United States and performing with the Toronto Symphony, Orchestra London and Kitchener-Waterloo Orchestra. Nexus has received the support of the Canada Council, the Canada Council Touring Office, the Government of Canada Department of External Affairs, the Ontario Arts Council, the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Communications, the Arts Council of Great Britain, the New York State Council for the Arts, and the Connecticut Commission on the Arts.

FRANK HARMANTAS graduated with honours in Music Education from the University of Illinois, after which he went to Washington, D.C. to join the United States Army Band as Principal Trombone and Soloist. While in Washington, he obtained a Masters Degree in Performance from Catholic University of America. Additional studies include Indiana University and the Eastman School of Music. Since 1971, Mr. Harmantas has been a member of the Toronto Symphony, where he currently holds the position of Associate Principal Trombone. He has performed as principal with National Ballet Orchestra, the Hamilton Philharmonic, and the CBC Orchestra, as well as numerous chamber ensembles. Formerly on staff at the Royal Conservatory of Music, he is now Adjunct Professor at the Faculty of Music, where he instructs low brass, coaches chamber ensembles, and directs the Trombone choir.

JUDY LOMAN graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music, where she studied with celebrated harpist Carlos Salzedo. Since 1960, she has been principal harpist with the Toronto Symphony and, as a soloist, has appeared throughout Europe, the United States, Japan and Canada. She frequently performs contemporary music and has been instrumental in having new works composed for the harp. Miss Loman is often heard on CBC radio and television, and has recorded for the RCA, Columbia, CBC and Aquitaine labels. She is winner of both a JUNO Award and the Canada Council's Grand Prix du Disque. Miss Loman is Professor of Harp at the University of Toronto and has established a school for harpists in Fenelon Falls, Ontario.

PHIL NIMMONS joined the University of Toronto in 1973 as instructor in jazz techniques is now Director Emeritus of the Faculty's Jazz Program. A tireless proponent for the development of educational facilities for jazz and related music, he is the Director of Jazz Studies at the Courtenay Youth Centre, and has held similar positions at the University of New Brunswick, Banff School of Fine Arts and the University of Western Ontario. He currently directs a summer jazz program at the Interprovincial Music camp. A prolific and adventurous composer, Mr. Nimmons' own works in both the jazz and classical vein date from 1948. The recording of his *Atlantic Suite* (1974), performed by his band Nimmons N' Nine Plus Six, received the first Juno Award given in the jazz category in 1976. *Plateaus: Cariboo Country Tone Poem*, commissioned by the CBC Vancouver Orchestra and premiered in 1986, was subsequently recorded by that ensemble for CBC Classics. The Olympic Arts Festival of the 1988 Winter Games commissioned *The Torch*, and the work was premiered in Calgary by an Olympic Jazz Band, directed by Rob McConnell, last March. Other recently commissioned works include *Images entre nous*, for clarinetist James Campbell and pianist Gene DiNovi; *Concerto for Trumpet* was commissioned by the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, with the assistance of the Ontario Arts Council and the Laidlaw Foundation. Dan Warren, principal second trumpet, was the soloist when the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra premiered the work last spring.

GORDON SWEENEY studied trombone at the Curtis Institute of Music, graduating in 1959. His teachers have included Charles Gusikoff and Ralph Liese. He has played with the Toronto and Dallas Symphonies, and teaches at the Banff School of Fine Arts, the Royal Conservatory of Music, and the University of Toronto.

MICHAEL WHITE has been in the forefront of the contemporary music scene in Toronto for the past decade performing with New Music Concerts, ArrayMusic and the Esprit Orchestra, Nexus, Hugh Marsh and Mary Margaret 'Hara. He has toured throughout Canada with ArrayMusic and the Esprit Orchestra. In Europe, he has performed at the Huddersfield Festival, the Belfast Festival, the Third Eye Centre(Glasgow) and the Ferienkurse für Neue Musik in Darmstadt (Germany) as a soloist and in ensemble. White is widely known for his work with Bruce Cockburn(1985-7), from tours of Germany, the United States and Canada and as a member of guitarist David Torn's group "Cloud about mercury" tour of the United States (1987), with Mick Karn and Bill Bruford. In 1988, Michael White and drummer Michel Lambert, formed the duo Lonely Universe, utilising trumpet with live signal-processing and drums augmented with metal objects. The Music of Lonely Universe was first presented on the "Pushing the Envelope" series at the Music Gallery (Toronto). David Torn and Mick Karn joined the duo in December of 1988 to record a disc for Kurt Renker of CMP Records, with engineer Walter Quintus. Lonely Universe (CMP 41) has been released throughout Europe, Scandinavia and Japan.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE FACULTY OF MUSIC

THURSDAY NOON SERIES

Thursday, October 3, 1991 at 12:10 pm

A presentation of **world music** introduced by Prof. Jim Kippen

Thursday, October 10, 1991 at 8:00 pm

Tafelmusik members Sergei Istomin, viola da gamba,
Christine Mahler, cello and Charlotte Nediger, harsichord
join Jeanne Lamon, violin, in concert, performing
works by Marais, Rameau, Buxtehude, Bach, Marini and Corelli

FACULTY RECITAL

Friday, October 11, 1991 at 8:00 pm

The Saxophone in the New World, David Tanner, saxophone,
with Patricia Krueger, piano, Gary Binstead, bass and
Steve Smith, piano, performing works by Rudy Wiedoft,
Jimmy Dorsey, Johnny Hodges, Charlie Parker, Paul Desmond and Phil Woods
